UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mr. Belmont

DATE: December 18, 1963

FROM: A. Rosen

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION
ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT

Mr. J. Lee Rankin was contacted yesterday at his office at 4:00 p.m., at which time he was furnished five complete sets of reports and exhibits prepared by the Bureau. Mr. Rankin was most appreciative of receiving these copies and stated that for the time being this would be a sufficient number and if he desired more, he would so advise.

During the contact with Rankin he advised that the Commission had met the previous day and that a number of items had come to light wherein clarification was needed. These items are set forth hereinafter.

Rankin requested information as to whether or not the Bureau had obtained the medical reports concerning the shooting of the President from Parkland Hospital in Dallas as well as the report from U. S. Naval Hospital, Bethesda. This is one of the items which Rankin mentioned on the telephone on 12/17/63 when he contacted the Bureau. It was again pointed out to Mr. Rankin that our investigative report would cover in detail the results of the medical examination at the Parkland Hospital. Rankin was advised that the family of the President had requested the report from the U. S. Naval Hospital at Bethesda be kept as confidential as possible and for this reason the Bureau did not obtain the medical report for inclusion in the investigative report prepared by the Bureau. He was also told that this report was in the possession of the Secret Service. Rankin stated that it would not be necessary to do anything on this and that in the event Secret Service did not supply the medical report with material to be furnished by Secret Service, the Commission would request the medical report from Secret Service.

Mr. Rankin indicated the Commission desired that income tax returns dating back to 1955 be obtained relative to Lee Harvey Oswald, Jack Ruby, his brother Earl Ruby, Mr. Michael Paine and Mrs. Ruth Paine (the Paine residence is the one in Irving, Texas, where Mrs. Oswald and her children were residing.) Rankin indicated the Commission was interested in the tax returns so that determination could be made of any collaboration of any kind between Oswald and Ruby as well as the Paine family and that they were desirous of having all negative information as well as positive.

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Mr. Rankin was advised that the Bureau was making a complete financial check of both Oswald and Ruby and that full details concerning income tax returns as well as the financial check would be included in the investigative report.

The Commission was also desirous that Western Union and Post Office money orders be checked, all localities where Oswald had resided and also be checked concerning Jack Ruby. Mr. Rankin was advised that this was being done and would be included in the investigative report.

Mr. Rankin asked whether or not all other Government agencies have been contacted for information that they might possess in their files concerning Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby. Mr. Rankin was advised that considerable information had been obtained from the files of other Government agencies and that our investigative report would definitely show the information obtained from all agencies of the Government. In this connection, a canvass of the other Government agencies is being made to make certain that we have received any information available on Oswald and Ruby.

Rankin is interested in knowing whether any of the intelligence organizations of the military had taken any action relative to Lee Harvey Oswald before he went to Russia or since his return. Rankin was advised that the U. S. Marine Corps' file on Oswald had been obtained, had been reviewed and summarized in our investigative report. He was told that a check would be made, if it had not already been completed, to ascertain whether any action had been taken by any of the military intelligence services. A check has been instituted to obtain this information if any such action was ever taken.

Mr. Rankin stated the Commission was very desirous of obtaining typewritten copies of information that had been included in our exhibits as handwriting of Oswald. He stated the Commission had experienced difficulty in reading his writing and would therefore appreciate typewritten copies. These copies have been prepared and will be made available to Mr. Rankin.

Mr. Rankin stated that for purposes of handling this investigation, the Commission had decided to handle it all on a top secret basis and that probably within the next few days they would have the names of some individuals concerning whom they would desire a check made. Mr. Rankin was advised that in the event he desired a name check on these individuals it could be handled in very short order but that if he had in mind a full investigation it would take considerable time. Rankin advised that no definite decision had been made on this at the present and he would be in touch with the Bureau later concerning this matter.

Mr. Rankin inquired whether information would be available covering investigation that had been conducted in Mexico concerning Oswald's activities and whether or not there was any necessity for the Commission attempting to obtain any information from the Mexican Government. Mr. Rankin was advised that this matter would be checked into and he would be advised as soon as possible.

Concerning films, Mr. Rankin mentioned that Mr. Larson of Life-Time Corporation had offered to make available to the President's Commission the film in possession of Life relative to the shooting of the President. Mr. Rankin desired to know whether the Bureau had copies of this film, and if it could be made available to the Presidents Commission. Mr. Rankin was advised that the Bureau did have this particular film along with other film relating to the assassination of the President and that he would be advised later as to what film was actually available.

Mr. Rankin stated that he did not know if it would be possible for the Bureau to arrange for a type of re-enactment of the assassination of the President but that he felt that it would be of invaluable aid to the Commission if, through photographs, diagrams or other arrangements, the Commission would be able to sit down and be briefed as to what actually occurred in a more or less chronological story of the events which took place and then to have made available the more important items of evidence that had been discovered. Mr. Rankin was advised that his request was thoroughly understood and that this matter would be looked into and he would be advised later as to what action could be taken. In this connection aerial photographs have been made depicting the scene where the President was assassinated as well as other important points of activity in Dallas. It is also noted that the Bureau's Exhibits Section is at the present time in the process of making three-dimensional exhibits which would completely portray the activities which occurred in Dallas. It is believed that when these exhibits are completed that they would be most helpful in assisting the Commission to see exactly the events that transpired in Dallas relative to the assassination of the President. Mr. Rankin indicated that he presumed it would be better for members of the Commission to come to the Bureau for such a briefing if this could be arranged and that he would not hesitate to ask the members of the Commission to come to the Bureau for this briefing rather than have Bureau personnel come up to headquarters of the Commission.

During the interview, Mr. Rankin was asked whether or not the Commission intended to hire investigators. It was pointed out to Mr. Rankin that the Bureau was desirous of being of any assistance that it could possibly render and that it would be glad to conduct further inquiries concerning any matters that the Commission desired. Mr. Rankin stated that he was most appreciative of this offer on the part of the Bureau and that he personally felt that the Bureau would be only too glad to cooperate on any request the Commission might have.

Rankin advised that while he did not share the views of some members of the Commission, there were some who had the feeling that it might be best to have investigators assigned to the Commission inasmuch as it might develop that the Commission would desire some checks on one or more of the Government agencies involved in the over-all matter. Mr. Rankin stated that he personally felt that the responsible Government agencies involved would be able to handle their own phases of this matter and that he sincerely hoped that it would not be necessary to hire investigators for the Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(1) It is recommended that Mr. Rankin be advised that the results of the investigation conducted in Mexico relative to Oswald are being received and that this information will be submitted to the Commission at an early date. (Our material from Legat, Mexico, is ready. We are clearing CIA material with CIA). Rankin advised CIA will furnish theirs [illegible] when requested. 12/20 Jim

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(2) Concerning films that are available, it is recommended that Mr. Rankin be advised that the Bureau has a copy of the film which Life-Time Corporation has as well as other film relating to the assassination of the President and that all of these films can be viewed by the President's Commission whenever it desires. Rankin advised of film availability Jim 12/20

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(3) If approved, Mr. Rankin will be advised that the Bureau is in the process at the present time of preparing three-dimensional exhibits which will accurately portray the locations covering the assassination of the President along with other material which would be of considerable benefit to the Commission. He will be advised that when these exhibits are completed, arrangements will be made with him so that the Commission may view these exhibits at their convenience. Mr. Gauthier has assured that the exhibits will be ready by 1/2/64.

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Rankin advised 12/20 Jim